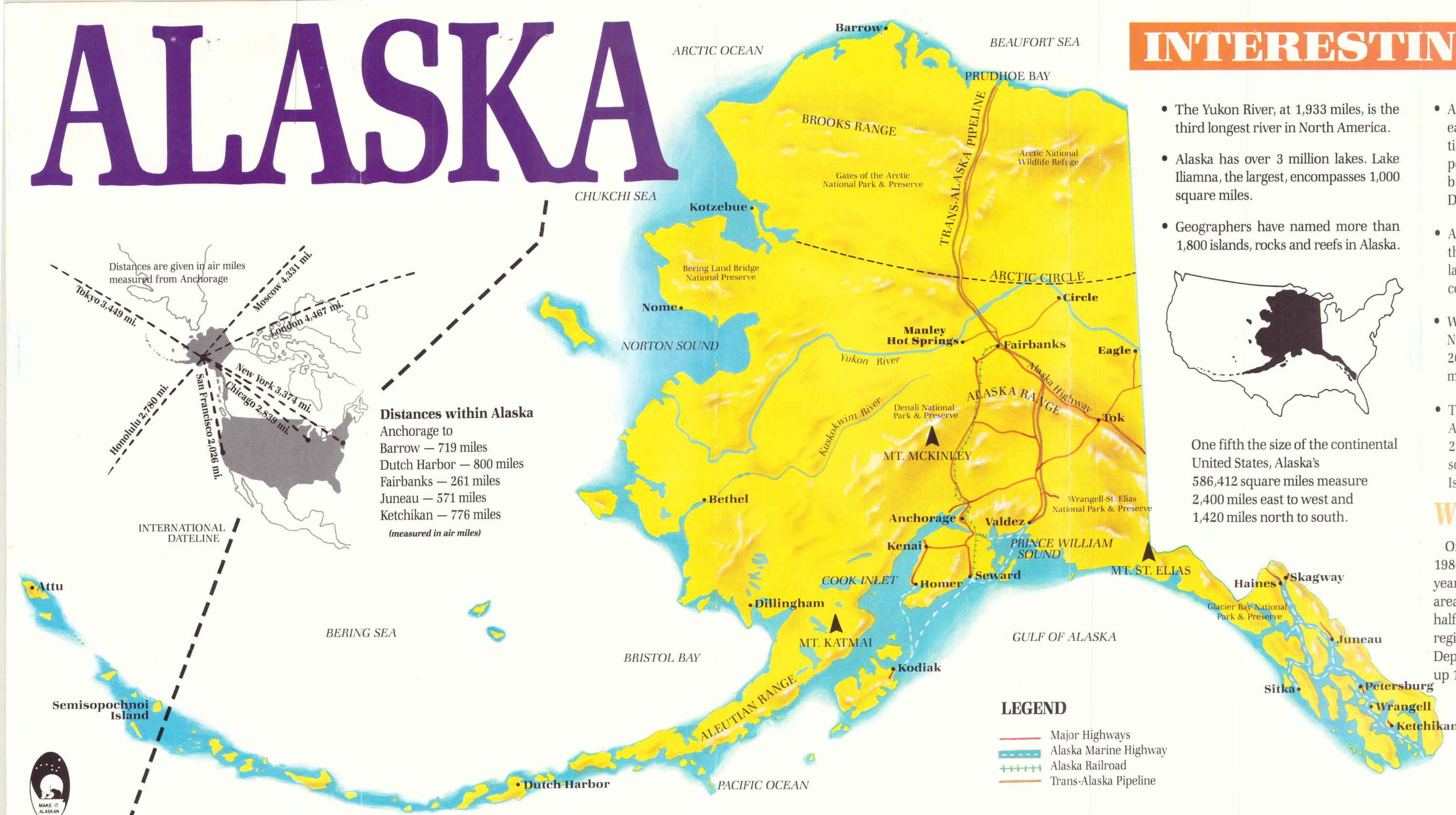


ALASKA

The Great Land

ALASKA



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ALASKA

- The Yukon River, at 1,933 miles, is the third longest river in North America.
- Alaska has over 3 million lakes. Lake Iliamna, the largest, encompasses 1,000 square miles.
- Geographers have named more than 1,800 islands, rocks and reefs in Alaska.
- Alaska includes the northernmost (Point Barrow), easternmost (Semisopochnoi Island in the Aleutians), and westernmost (Little Diomed Island) points in the United States. This is possible because Alaska straddles the International Dateline.
- Alaska covers 586,412 square miles, or one-fifth the area of the lower 48 states. This makes it larger than Texas and the next three largest states combined.
- Within Alaska looms the tallest mountain in North America — Mt. McKinley — which stands 20,320 feet tall. "Denali," the Indian name for the mountain, means "the Great One."
- There are more active glaciers and ice fields in Alaska than in the rest of the inhabited world — 28,800 square miles. Malaspina Glacier, 2,937 square miles, is larger than the state of Rhode Island.
- Barrow is a mere 800 miles from the North Pole. When the sun rises in Barrow on May 10, it doesn't set again for nearly three months. When it sets on November 18, Barrow residents don't see the sun again for more than two months.
- Alaska's 33,904 mile shoreline is longer than the rest of America's coastline combined.
- On March 27, 1964, North America's strongest recorded earthquake rocked Alaska with incredible force, measuring 8.4 on the Richter Scale.
- Alaska's flag was designed by 13-year-old Benny Benson, from Chignik, Alaska. His design was selected from 142 entrants, and was adopted as the territorial flag in 1927.
- Juneau, Alaska, is the only state capital in the U.S. which has no roads in or out.

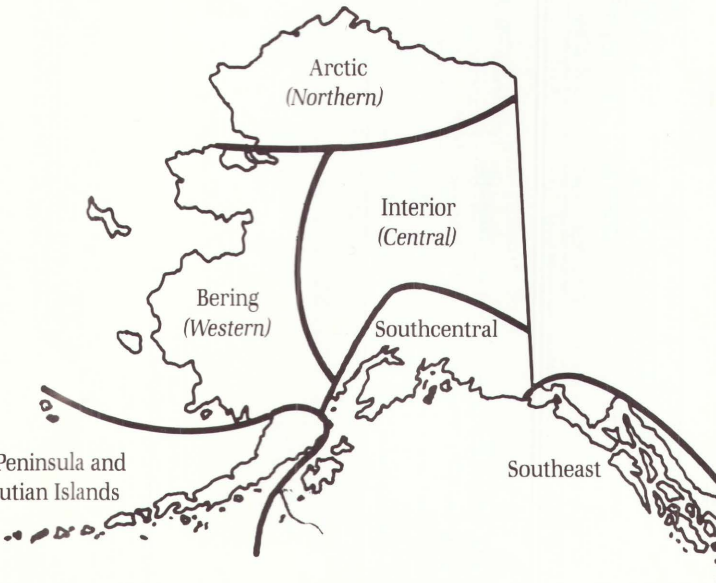


One fifth the size of the continental United States, Alaska's 586,412 square miles measure 2,400 miles east to west and 1,420 miles north to south.

Who lives in Alaska?

On the average, Alaskans are young. As of the 1980 census, the average age of Alaskans was 26 years old. Most of Alaska's residents live in urban areas of more than 2,500 people, and more than half the state's citizens live in the Southcentral region near Anchorage. According to the 1988 Department of Labor figures, Alaska Natives make up 15 percent of the state's population.

The state of Alaska is often described by regional designations.



State Symbols

TREE: The tall, stately, blue-green Sitka Spruce was named the state tree by the 1961 legislature. The evergreen is found throughout the southern and central areas of Alaska.

FISH: Gigantic King Salmon weighing more than 100 pounds have been caught in Alaska waters. The king of fish, also called Chinook Salmon, was designated as the state fish in 1962.

FLOWER: A small, light-blue flower, the Forget-Me-Not was adopted as Alaska's flower in 1949. The flower grows well in most of Alaska's varied climate.

BIRD: The Willow Ptarmigan changes color — from light brown to snow white — with the coming of winter snows. The pheasant-like bird was named Alaska's official bird in 1955.

SPORT: Dog mushing once was a primary form of transportation in many areas of Alaska and remains important in some rural villages. Mushing now is a very popular winter sport. It was adopted as the official state sport in 1972.

MINERAL: The search for gold played a major role in shaping the history of Alaska, from the discovery of gold in Juneau to the great gold rush at Nome. Gold was named the state mineral by the 1968 legislature.

GEM: Alaska has great deposits of jade including an entire mountain of dark green gem on the Seward Peninsula. Jade was named the state gem in 1968.

MOTTO: "North to the Future." This symbolizes the confidence of Alaskans in the Great Land's future. The phrase was adopted as the state motto in 1967.

ALASKA STATE FLAG: The blue field is for the Alaska sky and the Forget-Me-Not, an Alaskan flower. The North Star is for the future State of Alaska, the most northerly of the Union. The dipper is for the Great Bear — symbolizing strength.

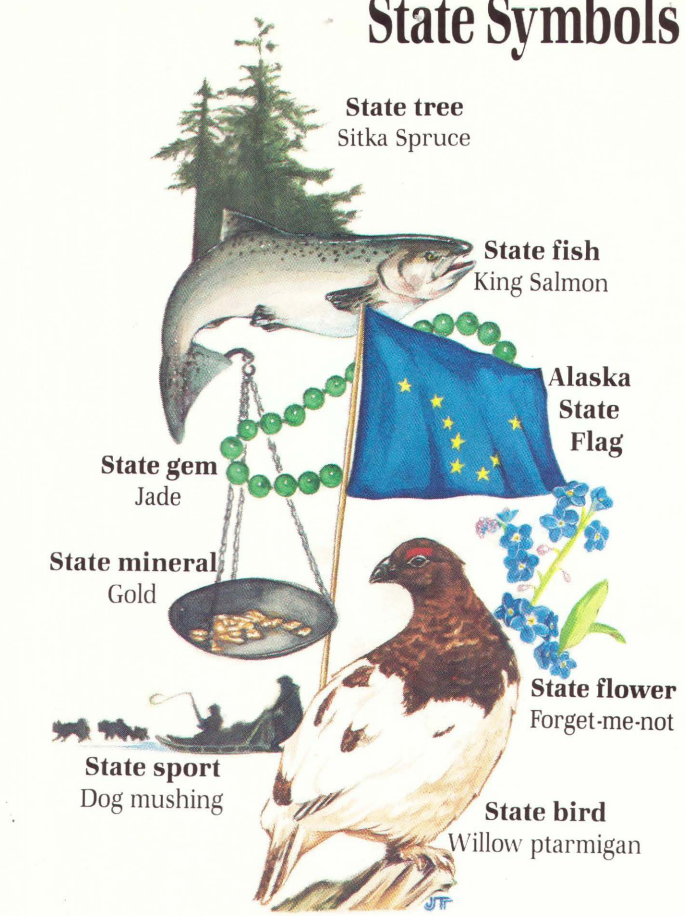
Population

Alaska's population has grown fast, but at just over half a million, it still remains very small compared with other states. Only 551,947 people live in Alaska, according to the 1990 census.

Anchorage	236,934	Kodiak	6,619
Fairbanks	73,540	Kenai	6,647
Juneau	26,422	Bethel	4,219
Ketchikan	12,436	Soldotna	4,021
Sitka	8,102	Wasilla	3,938

(1986 Alaska Dept. of Labor statistics)

State Symbols



Speaking Alaskan

Alaskan: Someone who has lived in Alaska through at least one cycle of the seasons, from the first snow to spring thaw.

Bush: Rural Alaska. Small villages or outlying areas not on a major road system.

Cheechako: A newcomer to Alaska.

Dog Mushing: Dog sleds and teams used as transportation in the winter; also a popular winter sport.

Sourdough: An Alaska old-timer. The word derives from the yeasty mixture carried by the early prospectors that was used to make bread and hot cakes.

Break-Up: Period of time between spring and summer when ice is breaking up on rivers and snow is melting.

Lower 48: The 48 states in the contiguous United States.

Outside: Any place other than Alaska, usually the Lower 48.

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Dear Friend:
Thank you for your interest in this great land we call Alaska. We extend to you an invitation to experience the grandeur of our state and enjoy some truly Alaskan hospitality.

Sincerely,
Walter J. Hickel
Walter J. Hickel
Governor

ALASKA

The Great Land

Alaska's Past

Alaska's history is a story of human discovery and adaptation to a rich and diverse environment. From the time of man's first arrival in Alaska, the land has played a dominant role in shaping the lives of those who live here.

During the most recent ice age, about 15,000 years ago, much of the water covering Earth's surface was in the form of ice and snow. Great land masses, which today are under water, were then exposed. One such land mass connected Alaska to Siberia.

Anthropologists now believe that most of Alaska's native people are descended from these nomadic hunters and gatherers who crossed from Siberia to North America.

These first Alaskans developed into three distinct groups: Eskimos, Aleuts, and Indians. The Eskimos scattered throughout the northern and western regions of Alaska, while the Aleuts settled mainly on the islands which now bear their name — the Aleutians. Alaska's two great Indian nations, the Tlingits and the Athapascans, settled in Southeast and Central Alaska.

In Southeast Alaska, a region of lush forest, abundant fish, game and edible plants, the Tlingits (pronounced Klink-its) thrived. Their highly developed culture is evidenced by the totem poles, ceremonial costumes, and the exquisite blankets they produced. But the Tlingits were also fierce warriors. When the first Russians tried to settle in Sitka, the Tlingits drove them out, despite the guns and cannons brought by the intruders.

Two other small Indian tribes, the Tsimshians and Haidas, moved from Canada to Southeast Alaska in the 1700s and 1800s. Today, the Tlingit, Tsimshian and Haida cultures remain strong.

While the Natives thrived in Southeast Alaska's mild climate, the Athapaskan Indians of Central



Alaska faced harsher living conditions. For them, life was often a matter of feast or famine.

The Athapascans, close relatives of the Navajos and Apaches, were accomplished hunters. They often followed herds of caribou and moose for vast distances, and fished for salmon and other river fish. Furs and other goods were traded with nearby Tlingits and Eskimos.

North and west of the Athapascans lived the Eskimos. In this harsh and barren land they hunted, fished, and gathered the berries and roots that grew during the brief, cool summers. Daring Eskimo hunters harpooned great whales from small, skin-covered canoes called kayaks. The Eskimos also hunted for walrus, seal, and polar bears. They followed the herds of caribou which migrated across the frozen tundra and they hunted sea and land birds.

The smallest group of Alaska Natives, the Aleuts, are a hardy people who lived off the sea. Their food, clothing, shelter, heat, and tools came from creatures living in the ocean or along its shoreline. Exceptional sailors, the Aleuts sometimes paddled hundreds of miles in skin-covered canoes, called baidarkas, to trade, visit, or stage daring raids on enemy villages.

Not until the mid-1700s did outsiders discover the land the Aleuts called "Alyeska," or the "Great Land." In June 1741, Russian sailors led by Danish explorer Vitus Bering sailed from Siberia in search of whatever lands lay to the east. On July 16, Bering sighted Alaska's mainland.

Bering's most important discovery would be the prized sea otters which thrived in Alaska's waters. By 1745, Russian hunters were well established in the Aleutian Islands and the colonization of Alaska had begun.

The Russians were soon followed by British, Spanish, and American explorers and adventurers. But it was the Russians who stayed and had the greatest impact on Alaska. In 1784, they established their first permanent settlement on Kodiak Island and by 1799 expanded their reach all the way to Sitka on Alaska's southeast coast. Russia's claim to Alaska was now firmly established.

Russian America prospered under its manager, Alexander Baranof, but when war broke out in Europe in the 1820s Russia had trouble defending its vast empire. Whalers and fur traders from other nations began to move into the North American territories claimed by Russia. As the profits from the fur trade declined, Russian interest in Alaska faded.

William H. Seward, Secretary of State under Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson, offered Russia \$7,200,000, or two cents per acre, for Alaska at the end of the American Civil War. The offer was accepted, but many Americans scoffed at the purchase, calling Alaska "Seward's Icebox," and "Seward Folly." Nevertheless on October 18, 1867, the Stars and Stripes flew for the first time over Alaska.

For many years, the federal government paid little attention to its newest possession. In 1877, the sole authority for governing Alaska's half million square miles and 40,000 residents was placed in the hands of the customs collector in Sitka. Little would change until the discovery of gold.

The presence of gold in Alaska had long been known, but not until the 1880 discovery by Joe Juneau and Richard Harris would the gold rush era truly begin. Soon hundreds of prospectors were pouring into the site which would later bear Juneau's name. In 1897, gold was discovered on the Klondike River in Canada's Yukon Territory. Some 100,000 fortune seekers headed for the Klondike gold fields, many of them hiking from Skagway across the treacherous Chilkoot Trail.

These discoveries paled in 1898 when gold was found on the beaches near Nome. A city of tents sprang up overnight, and by 1900, 232 ships had arrived in Nome carrying nearly 18,000 prospectors.

Gold had focused the attention of the world on Alaska. Newspapers carried sensational stories about the lawlessness in Skagway and Nome. Exaggerated or not, they pointed out the need to establish law and order on America's frontier. In 1900, a code of laws was adopted and a court system established, but it wasn't until 1912 that Alaska was granted true territorial status.

Hardly noticed during the frenzy of the gold rush was the birth of a new industry which would become the backbone of Alaska's economy: salmon fishing. By 1900 more than 50 salmon canneries were operating between Ketchikan and Bristol Bay.

Throughout the following decades the distant federal government was preoccupied with a war in Europe, and a depression at home. But when America declared war on Japan in 1941, the nation was suddenly aware of Alaska's strategic position. When Japan invaded the Aleutian Islands in 1943, more than 140,000 military personnel were stationed in Alaska. The Aleutian campaign, known as the "One Thousand Mile War," was the first battle fought on American soil since the Civil War.

To serve as a supply route for military personnel stationed in Alaska, a 1,523-mile gravel highway was built through Canada to Fairbanks. Completed in just eight months, the Alaska Highway is still the only road linking Alaska to the lower 48 states.

Since early territorial days, many Alaskans had favored statehood. But no new states had been admitted to the union since 1912, and Congress was initially reluctant to act on the request of this vast, sparsely settled territory. Alaskans would not give up, however, and on June 30, 1958, Congress finally approved the Alaska Statehood Act.

The 49th State



Alaska officially became the 49th state on January 3, 1959. At that time the state constitution, written by elected delegates and approved by Alaska's voters in 1958, took effect.

Every four years Alaskans elect a governor and a lieutenant governor to four-year terms. The governor, who appoints the heads of all 14 state departments as well as many other officials, is considered one of the most powerful governors in our country.

The Alaska State Legislature is made up of a Senate and a House of Representatives. Forty representatives are elected to two-year terms; twenty senators serve four-year terms. Each year the legislature meets in Juneau to pass a state budget and to make new laws.

Two basic forms of local government exist in Alaska: the city and the borough. The borough is similar to the county in many other states. The City and Borough of Juneau covers about 3,300 square miles — the second largest "city" (by area) in North America. Sitka, to the south, claims the title of America's largest city.

Alaska's two U.S. Senators serve six-year terms of office; the one U.S. Representative a two-year term.

Nature's Bounty

Alaska is a land rich in resources, in opportunity, and in people involved in making a life on America's "last frontier."

Oil is especially important because about 90 percent of the state's revenues come from the production and export of crude oil and natural gas. Every day 63 million gallons of oil are pumped through the trans-Alaska pipeline. This pipeline snakes its way from Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's northern coast to the southcentral port of Valdez where the oil is pumped into tankers.

The fishing and seafood processing industries have always been important to Alaska. More people work on fishing boats and in processing plants than in any other private industry in the state. Alaska's waters support some of the world's richest fisheries. In fact, most of America's salmon, crab, halibut, and herring come from Alaska.

Logging, sawmills, and pulp mills provide jobs for many Alaskans. The Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska contains more than five million acres of commercial forest land.

Hard rock minerals are thought to be Alaska's greatest undeveloped natural resource. Some geologists believe Alaska contains as much coal as the rest of the United States combined. Great deposits of other minerals have also been found, and it is believed there is much left to discover.

Although it might seem unlikely, productive farms operate in Alaska. The fertile Matanuska and Tanana valleys near Anchorage and Fairbanks produce many crops including grains and vegetables. Because of the long summer days, some vegetables grow to astonishing sizes. Eighty-pound cabbages and 210-pound turnips have been harvested in the Matanuska Valley.

Like many areas in the lower 48, Alaska offers good range land for grazing animals. Reindeer herds brought into the state more than 50 years ago thrive near Nome.

Parks Preserve the Great Land

Alaska's unique beauty and vast wilderness areas are among its greatest treasures. Protecting this special environment for future generations has been a goal of both the state and federal governments. Now more than half of the nation's parklands are found in Alaska.

One of the best-known and most-visited areas in Alaska is Denali National Park and Preserve which surrounds north America's highest mountain, 20,320-foot Mt. McKinley. "Denali," the Indian name for the peak, means "The Great One."

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve in Southeast Alaska encompasses one of the most active glacial areas in the world. Here, 16 separate glaciers complete their descent to the sea.

Katmai National Park and Preserve on the Alaska Peninsula reflects its volcanic origin. One well-known area, named "The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes," was created in 1912 after one of the most violent volcanic eruptions of modern times.

In Southeast Alaska, Misty Fjords National Monument includes an awe-some coastal area best visited by boat. Admiralty Island National Monument offers sanctuary to brown bear, nesting bald eagles, deer, and other wildlife.

Sitka National Historic Park features a walk through a lofty forest dotted with Tlingit Indian totem poles. Visitors to the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park can trace the footsteps of gold rush fortune-seekers from Skagway across the Chilkoot Trail to Canada's Yukon Territory.

Additionally, Alaska operates the nation's largest state park system, encompassing over three million acres. In addition to offering outstanding recreational opportunities, Alaska's state parks reflect the rich cultural and historic heritage of the area.

Wild Heritage

In Alaska the wildlife is as varied as the land itself. In the vast, treeless interior, great herds of caribou roam the tundra; amid lush forests, giant Kodiak brown bear fish the streams for salmon or forage for roots and berries; on the Chilkat River near Haines, as many as 3,500 bald eagles gather late each year to feed on salmon.

Also among Alaska's land mammals are the mountain goat, Dall sheep, bison, musk ox, elk, Sitka black-tailed deer, reindeer, and largest of all, the moose. An adult male, or bull, can weigh up to 1,600 pounds and stand six feet high at the shoulder.

Somewhat smaller, but far more dangerous, is the Kodiak brown bear, the largest carnivore in the world. A member of the grizzly family, the Kodiak brown bear is related to Alaska's other bears — the polar bear, the black bear, and the rare glacier or blue bear.

Smaller fur-bearing animals found in Alaska include otter, beaver, mink, the weasel, fox, lynx, wolverine, muskrat, rabbit, and several kinds of squirrel. Although seldom seen by people, a large number of wolves live throughout the state.

Alaska is refuge for nearly 400 species of birds. Songbirds, sea birds, swans, cranes,



ducks and geese can be seen throughout Alaska, as can predators such as hawks, falcon, and several species of fowl. More bald eagles live in Alaska than in all other states combined.

Finally, Alaska's rugged shoreline offers sanctuary to more marine mammals than are found anywhere else. The world's largest colony of seals — numbering one million — breed undisturbed on the Pribilof Islands. The walrus also thrives in Alaska's waters where it feeds on clams and other shellfish. Some 16 kinds of whales have been spotted off Alaska's shores, including the humpback, the Orca or killer whale, the snow-white beluga whale, and the narwhal which sports a tusk on its snout similar to the mythical unicorn.

Traveling in a Unique Land



Alaska's mountain ranges, glaciers, and vast stretches of wilderness create natural barriers to transportation. Today the airplane makes it easy to travel to outlying communities and regions, and for most Alaskans, flying is a necessary part of life.

In northern Alaska snowmobiles are often used during the winter and have largely replaced the traditional dogsled. "All terrain vehicles" are also important in many rural communities where roads are few and the terrain difficult.

For people living in Alaska's many coastal communities, the "Alaskan Marine Highway" is very important. This ferry system, which carries passengers and automobiles, connects 28 Alaska towns with British Columbia and Bellingham, Washington.

Although Alaska offers many unusual ways to travel, the automobile is common and necessary. Every year thousands of people drive to Alaska on the Alaska Highway. This road is the state's only land link with the "Outside."

The Alaska Railroad offers another alternative for travel in this vast land. Covering 470 miles, it joins Seward and Fairbanks. Between Anchorage and Fairbanks, where many people maintain homesteads which cannot be reached any other way, the train stops to pick up and let off passengers at various points in the middle of the wilderness.

Living Alaskan

Although few visitors still expect to find Alaskans living in igloos and riding on dogsleds, many are surprised to discover that daily life for most Alaskans is much like life in the lower 48. Some Alaskans choose an isolated and independent life, but most live in modern homes, drive automobiles, watch television, and shop in modern stores.

Alaska's larger communities have paved streets, traffic lights, fast food restaurants, theaters, recreation facilities, and the conveniences found in most modern cities. Art galleries, museums, concerts and live theater as well as a fine statewide university system also contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by Alaskans.

Satellites beam telephone service and television into even the most isolated villages. Use of this satellite system allows the state to provide nearly every Alaskan community with network television. Although some of Alaska's smaller towns have one-room school houses, most classrooms throughout the state are very similar to schools anywhere in the U.S.

Life in the Great Land is much like life in towns and cities across America.

